

## Conflicts of interest myth busters

### Recruitment and selection fact sheet

**Purpose:** this fact sheet is guidance material to support the directive relating to recruitment and selection. It debunks common myths regarding conflicts of interest in recruitment.

MYTH	FACT
<p>✘ If I declare a conflict of interest, it will look like I'm doing something wrong</p>	<p>✔ Making a declaration is not a sign of wrongdoing. The problem occurs when conflicts of interest are hidden, partially disclosed or poorly managed. By identifying conflicts of interest early and throughout the recruitment process, and managing them transparently and appropriately, you demonstrate integrity, uphold fairness and maintain trust in the process.</p>
<p>✘ I cannot be on the selection panel as I am listed as a referee for an applicant</p>	<p>✔ Being a referee for an applicant does not automatically exclude you from participating on a selection panel. However, this situation requires careful consideration and potential management to ensure fairness and transparency in the process.</p> <p>It is important to declare that you are a referee in the <a href="#">Conflicts of interest in recruitment declarations form</a>. Consider whether your relationship with the applicant could amount to a perceived or actual conflict of interest. Each circumstance is unique and the decision maker will assess whether it is appropriate for you to act as both a referee and a panel member. They may also implement strategies to manage the situation effectively.</p>
<p>✘ All professional relationships amount to a conflict of interest</p>	<p>✔ A professional relationship does not, on its own, create a conflict of interest, unless there is a factor in the relationship that could influence, or reasonably be perceived to influence, decision-making. Both positive and adverse views about an applicant may amount to a conflict of interest. This aligns with Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) decisions, which have noted that <i>"the existence of a professional relationship alone does not prima facie point to a conflict of interest, but it does not exclude it either."</i><sup>1</sup></p> <p>It is best practice to declare professional relationships that do not amount to a conflict of interest in Section A of the <a href="#">Conflicts of interest in recruitment declarations form</a>. Refer to the <i>Identifying conflicts of interest fact sheet</i> on the <a href="#">Identify and manage a conflict of interest in recruitment</a> page for further guidance.</p>
<p>✘ Declaring and managing conflicts of interest will delay the recruitment and selection process</p>	<p>✔ Declaring and managing conflicts is a simple, proactive step that ensures the recruitment process runs smoothly, avoiding delays or issues later. Failing to declare conflicts can breach the Code of Conduct, may constitute corrupt conduct, and can result in promotion appeals to the QIRC. This could revoke the appointment, require a fresh recruitment process, and cause reputational and personal impacts. By addressing conflicts early, you protect the integrity of the process, ensure fair and transparent outcomes and reduce the risk of needing to adjust the panel composition or take corrective actions later.</p>

<sup>1</sup>Wyer v State of Queensland (Department of Education) [2022] QIRC 408